



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

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Attorney General Bruning Says Death Sentence for Murderer Should Stand

Note: A sound bite on this topic will be available shortly at: <http://www.ago.ne.gov>

(Lincoln, Neb) The Attorney General's Office presented oral arguments in front of the Nebraska Supreme Court today arguing the five death sentences handed to Norfolk bank robber Erick Vela should be upheld.

Vela was one of three robbers who entered the U.S. Bank in Norfolk in 2002. Inside the bank, Vela, Jorge Galindo, and Jose Sandoval shot and killed four bank employees and a customer. A jury convicted Vela on five counts of first-degree murder. Vela was sentenced to death for each murder.

"This level of violence and senseless loss of life demands the ultimate punishment," said Bruning. "The victims and their families deserve justice."

In Nebraska, every death sentence must be reviewed by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

Vela was the first person to claim he was exempt from a sentence of death due to mental retardation. That claim was rejected by the district court.

Solicitor General Kirk Brown is handling the case.

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